

OSCE HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING 2009

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**Written contribution of
The International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH)
and
The World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)**

**Within the framework of their joint programme,
The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders**

**Under working session 3 of the agenda on “Fundamental Freedoms”
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The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), within the framework of their joint programme, the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, wish to draw the attention of the Organisation for the Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) on the deteriorating situation of human rights defenders in some OSCE Participating States.

The Observatory indeed deplores the continuing crackdown on the independent civil society in some OSCE Participating States, a crackdown fuelled and strengthened amongst others by recent geopolitical developments in the OSCE area.

In 2009, freedoms of association and peaceful assembly remained flouted, as for example in *Kyrgyzstan*, the *Russian Federation* and *Belarus*. The year 2009 was marked by an increase of the number of human rights defenders killed in the *Russian Federation*. Further, some defenders were or have continued to be arbitrarily detained or subjected to judicial harassment (*Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation, Turkey, Uzbekistan*) while the authorities failed, in a number of cases, to protect human rights defenders when threatened or attacked by non-State actors (*Russian Federation*).

Extra-judicial killings of human rights defenders in the Russian Federation

The year 2009 was marked by an increase of the number of human rights defenders killed in the *Russian Federation*:

- On January 19, 2009, Mr. **Stanislav Markelov**, a prominent human rights lawyer, and Ms. **Anastacia Baburova**, freelance journalist, were shot dead in Moscow. Before he was killed, Mr. Markelov had received death threats both in the form of text messages and phone calls. As of now, their murderers have not yet been identified;
- On July 15, 2009, Ms. **Natalia Estemirova**, a member of the Memorial Human Rights Centre in Grozny, was kidnapped and subsequently killed. She was closely involved in the defence of human rights and the Chechen authorities had repeatedly expressed their discontent with her work. More particularly, on July 7, 2009, she had disclosed and denounced the public arbitrary killing of an alleged rebel by men dressed up in camouflage uniforms in the village of Akhkintchou-Borzoï.
- On August 10, 2009, Mrs. **Zarema Sadulayeva** and her husband Mr. **Alik (Umar) Dzhabraïlov**, respectively Head of the office and member of the NGO "Save the Generation" in Grozny, were kidnapped in the organisation's premises, ill-treated, tortured and subsequently shot dead.

The Observatory is also particularly concerned with the fact that almost three years after the assassination of the independent journalist and human rights activist Ms. **Anna Politkovskaya**, the enquiry has not led to the identification of those responsible for such crime. Such climate of impunity has therefore encouraged the perpetrators of such violations to continue.

The Observatory expresses its deepest indignation with these dreadful facts, and calls for the immediate and unconditional opening of independent and transparent investigations, so that all those responsible be identified, tried and sanctioned according to law. The Observatory believes that the fight against impunity of such crimes is a key element which will contribute to the reinforcement of an enabling environment for the respect of human rights and the rule of law in the country.

Threats and assaults faced by human rights defenders

In 2009, several human rights defenders continued to be harassed in some OSCE Participating States, through, *inter alia*, slandering and assaults. The following cases confirm the determination of both State and non-State actors to silence human rights activists, as well as the failure and the lack of will of the State authorities to identify the perpetrators and to bring them to justice, in violation of Article 12.2 of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 9, 1998.

In the *Russian Federation*, several human rights defenders fighting against racism and xenophobia were subjected to various threats and attacks:

- On February 8, 2009, Ms. **Galina Kozhevnikova**, Deputy Director of the SOVA Centre, a human rights NGO and think tank that conducts sociological research on development of nationalism and racism in Russia, received death threats by email in Moscow, a few days after the announcement of the upcoming presentation of a report on radical nationalism.

- Moreover, on February 21, 2009, threats and acts of harassment intensified against Mr. **Alexander Verkhovsky**, Director of the SOVA Centre. Individuals managed to enter Mr. Verkhovsky's building for the second time since the beginning of 2009, and were able this time to reach the door of his flat. An investigation was launched in order to identify those individuals, but as of September 2009, no responsible had been identified.

- On March 31, 2009, at around 11 pm, unidentified individuals severely beat up Mr. **Lev Ponomarev**, Executive Director of the All-Russia Public Movement "For Human Rights", in the surroundings of his home. They had reportedly been waiting for him near the entrance of the building. As the concierge appeared, the attackers escaped.

In *Russia*, members of Memorial were also subjected to various acts of harassment. For instance, in the evening of July 16, the Memorial centre was victim of surveillance by a grey car, after Ms. **Ekaterina Sokirianskaïa**, a collaborator with Memorial Grozny, had given her testimony to the Urus-Martan police on Ms. Natalia Estemirova's assassination. In the days following Ms. Estemirova's assassination, the above-mentioned car was also constantly parked in front of the residence of Mr. **Akhmed Guissaev**, collaborator with the Memorial office in Grozny. On August 12, 2009, Mr. Guissaev noticed that the same car was parked in front of his residence and informed an investigator of the Investigations Department of the *Prokuratura* section in charge of Chechnya about this element. However, as of September 2009, the latter had reportedly failed to take any action. Further, on the evening of August 13, as Mr. Guissaev returned home with his wife, four armed men in both plain clothes and camouflage uniforms got out from a white car, stopped them, pointed their guns at Mr. Guissaev, searched the couple and checked their identity. The four men refused both to identify themselves and to explain their acts. The Memorial office in Grozny was later compelled to suspend its activities, because of fears for the security of their members.

Moreover, on the afternoon of September 3, an unknown man visited the buildings where Mr. **Oleg Orlov**, Chairman of the Memorial Human Rights Centre, and Mr. **Alexander Cherkasov**, Researcher on armed conflict for Memorial, have their permanent addresses. On that day, a

neighbour informed Mr. Orlov that in his absence, a man had knocked on his door and had introduced himself as a tax inspector, inquiring whether anyone in the building was conducting unregistered business activity. The neighbour also reported that the person claiming to be a tax inspector appeared to be particularly interested in Mr. Orlov's flat. On the same day, an unknown woman, who also identified herself as a tax inspector enquiring whether residents were conducting unregistered business activities, visited the flat of Mr. Cherkasov, talked with his mother, and asked her about his professional activities. Following these visits, both Mr. Orlov and Mr. Cherkasov called their district tax inspectorates and were informed that no tax inspectorate employees had paid visits to their residences on that day.

In *Uzbekistan*, on April 15, 2009, Ms. **Elena Urlaeva**, a member of the Human Rights Alliance of Uzbekistan, was assaulted in Tashkent as she was leaving her home with her five-year-old son. Two young men wearing sunglasses beat her in the head and in the chest. They further insulted her and asked why she had not left Uzbekistan already. One of the assailants also made cuts in the jacket she was wearing. Her five-year-old son witnessed the entire attack.

Restrictions to freedom of association

In some countries in the region, in recent years, the interference with the rights of human rights defenders have been based on a particularly restrictive legislative arsenal regarding freedom of association (*Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation, Turkmenistan*), with direct consequences on the working conditions of human rights organisations and their members.

In *Belarus*, on January 26, 2009, 67 members of the Human Rights Centre "Viasna" - liquidated in 2003 - signed an application to the Ministry of Justice to register the organisation under the new name "Nasha Viasna", as according to the Belarusian legislation, the use of the name of an organisation that has been liquidated is forbidden. On February 29, 2009, members of "Viasna" were informed by letter of the decision of the Ministry of Justice to deny their request. On May 28, 2009, "Viasna" received another denial from the authorities, stating that the latest registration application submitted on April 25, 2009 under the name "Nasha Viasna" had been rejected by the Ministry of Justice. On August 12, 2009, the Supreme Court confirmed the decision transmitted in May 2009 denying the registration of "Nasha Viasna". This decision is final and cannot be appealed, leading to the risk of having the members of "Nasha Viasna" arrested at any time, as participating in the activities of an unregistered association is a crime punishable in Belarus by Article 193.1 of the Criminal Code. The Observatory considers that this decision is contrary to international human rights standards on freedom of association, and more precisely to Communication 1296/2004 of the United Nations Human Rights Committee, which states that the liquidation of the Human Rights Centre "Viasna" in 2003 had violated Article 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). The Observatory further deplores that on July 31, 2009, the Belarus Consulate in Paris refused to issue a visa to FIDH President Souhayr Belhassen, who was intending to hold a series of meetings with representatives of the Belarusian civil society, and to attend the hearings before the Supreme Court.

Throughout the years 2008 and 2009, the *Russian Federation* continued to rely on restrictive laws and measures in relation to freedom of association, thus making it easier to control independent civil society. For instance, members of the Kazan Human Rights Centre and the Interregional Human Rights Association "Agora", were victims of acts of harassment, searches and confiscations. These searches were reportedly conducted on the request of the Vice-Minister of Internal Affairs of Tatarstan, Mr. Rafael Guilmanov, who publicly accused the organisations of

having falsified their ledgers between 2006 and 2009. Such searches therefore seem to have aimed at seeking evidence of violations of the Russian legislation on taxes and taxations. It is to be noted that Mr. Safiouline, Head of the Direction of the Ministry of Justice for Tatarstan Republic, issued the order of inspection for the two organisations even though the *Rosfinmonitoring* had declared that it could not bring evidence of any violation from these organisations.

Moreover, on February 24, 2009, the Saint Petersburg City Court decided to uphold the confiscation by the police of Memorial Research Centre of Saint Petersburg's material. This decision overrules the verdict issued by the Derzhinsky District Court on January 20, 2009, in which the court declared that a police conducted on December 4 was illegal and asked for all archives confiscated during the search and held by the *Prokuratura* to be given back to the organisation. The said verdict pointed to a number of procedural violations during the search, in particular the obstruction made to the participation of the organisation's lawyer. Nonetheless, in the meantime, the organisation has had access to its archives and research materials on the history of authoritarian oppression in Soviet Russia.

Arbitrary detention and judicial harassment against human rights defenders

In 2009, a number of OSCE Participating States have continued to resort to abusive legislation or administrative practices contrary to international standards in an attempt to silence them.

In *Armenia*, Mr. **Arshaluys Hakobyan**, a member of the Armenian Helsinki Association and press photographer of the official website of the organisation, was subjected to judicial harassment after monitoring on May 31, 2009 the elections for the Mayor of Yerevan together with a group of observers, who were threatened with corporal punishment by members and the head of the electoral commission. Mr. Hakobyan subsequently filed a complaint with the Special Investigation Department. On June 5, 2009, Mr. Hakobyan was summoned by the Investigation Department to give testimonies without an official summon, so he refused to go unless they could provide one. The "summon" they delivered later did not contain any information about the criminal case or the reason as to why he was being summoned. Mr. Hakobyan refused to sign the paper alleging it was not valid. However, after pressuring him, the police officers eventually forced him to sign. During the arrest and later at the police department, Mr. Hakobyan underwent beatings and other ill-treatments. He was charged with "violence against a Government representative". He remained detained as of late September 2009.

In *Azerbaijan*, Mr. **Novruzali Mammadov**, a defender of the rights of the Talysh ethnic minority, died in detention on August 17, 2009. His health had deteriorated over the past months, in particular due to bad conditions of detention. Mr. Mammadov had been sentenced on June 24, 2008 by the Court of Serious Crimes to ten years in prison for "high treason" and "inciting national, racial, and religious hatred", after the Court argued that he had collected information necessary for the establishment of an administrative autonomy in the territories of Azerbaijan populated by Talysh people and had spread a negative image of Azerbaijan. His sentence had been confirmed in appeal on December 26.

Also in *Azerbaijan*, on December 13, 2008, Interior Minister of Azerbaijan, Ramil Usubov accused Ms. **Leyla Yunus**, Director of the Institute for Peace and Democracy in Azerbaijan (IPD) and a member of OMCT General Assembly, of "attacking the honour and dignity" of the police and the Interior Minister, following the publication of an interview on December 3 on the

www.day.az website. In the article, Ms. Yunus criticised the fact that the right to a fair trial was not guaranteed in Azerbaijan. On March 2, 2009, Interior Minister Mr. Ramil Usubov withdrew his complaint against Ms. Yunus. The decision of the court not to further consider the case was then read out by Mr. Ragib Gurbanov, Judge of the Yasamal District Court.

In *Belarus*, on March 31, 2009, Mr. **Leanid Svetsik**, one of the founders of the human rights association “Nasha Viasna” and a member of the Vitsebsk branch of the human rights centre Viasna, was charged with “fomentation of racial, national or religious enmity” and “defamation of the President”. He had been arrested by the KGB after they had searched his apartment on the day of May 28, 2008, and had confiscated human rights related documents. He had then been interrogated for more than two hours by an officer at the Vitsebsk *oblast* KGB office. The interrogation was videotaped. He had then been handed out the writ for the next interrogation, which was set on May 28, 2008. Mr. Svetsik went back to the KGB office on May 30, as he had to wait for his lawyer from Minsk. On that day, he and his lawyer signed a paper rejecting the accusations of the Public Prosecutor.

In *Kyrgyzstan*, on March 4, 2009, Mr. **Maxim Kuleshov**, Coordinator of the Tokmok Human Rights Resource Centre, and Mr. **Mikhail Golovanov** were arrested by the police while they were on their way to the Government House, where they had planned to hold a “street lesson on democracy”, aiming at showing citizens how to resort to non-violent methods to struggle for fundamental rights and to protect international human rights and the Constitution. It was then learned that Mr. Golovanov had been sentenced by the court to an administrative penalty of 15 days’ arrest and was in custody in Bishkek, while Mr. Kuleshov had been placed in Bishkek psychiatric hospital because of his “inappropriate behaviour”. Mr. Kuleshov was finally released on March 5, 2009. Mr. Golovanov was only released in the evening of March 6, 2009. The latter was accused of “obstructing the way of the presidential cortege”.

In the *Russian Federation*, Ms. **Karasteleva** and Mr. **Vadim Karestelev** were accused to have carried out “agitation actions” in schools, by notably calling on pupils to take part to the demonstrations that recently took place in Krasnodar against Law 1539-KZ of Krasnodar region, on “Measures to Prevent Child Neglect and Minors’ Offences in Krasnodar Territory”. Ms. Karasteleva and Mr. Karestelev had voiced concerns, bringing into question some provisions of the above-mentioned law that are contrary to children’ rights and over-regulate citizens’ rights and freedoms by imposing fines on parents of minors whose children do not respect a strict curfew. On May 21, 2009, on the basis of the complaint, the *Prokuratura* concluded that the actions of Mr. Karestelev and Ms. Karasteleva could be likely to trigger extremist activities aiming at hindering the legal State actions on the territory of Novorossisk.

On February 18, 2009, the administration of Volgograd prison colony LIU-15 lodged a suit against Ms. **Elena Maglevannaya**, a free-lance journalist for the Moscow-published *Svobodnoje Slovo* newspaper (“Free Word”) in Volgograd, southern Russia, for “honour and business reputation protection”, accusing her of spreading information on Mr. Zubayr Isaevich Zubayraev in order to destroy their reputation. The suit directly refers to the articles published by Ms. Maglevannaya on the situation of Mr. Zubayraev, a Chechen detained in Volgograd since 2007, on civitas.ru as well as to one of her article from the *Svobodnoje Slovo* newspaper that was re-published on the web page of the Islamic Committee of Russia. In those articles, Ms. Maglevannaya denounced Mr. Zubayraev’s conditions of detention as well as the ill-treatments faced in detention. On May 12, 2009, the Kirov District Court of Volgograd ruled that Ms. Elena Maglevannaya had spread false information regarding acts of torture inflicted against Mr. Zubajr Zubajraev while in detention, and should therefore pay 200,000 rubles (about 4,613 euros) as a

compensation for moral damage to the administration of LIU-15.

On May 13, 2009, at 9 am, Mr. **Aleksei Sokolov** was violently arrested by police officers in plain clothes, and beaten. His family was present and his wife was mishandled by the police too. The officers then pushed Mr. Sokolov in a car and drove away. Mr. Sokolov was detained for having allegedly taken part to the robbery in 2004 of the equipment (of a value of 1.5 million roubles) of a company in Bogdanovich, Sverdlovsk district. On April 23, 2009, the investigation in this case was indeed re-opened after a suspect, in jail for having committed another crime, would have allegedly confessed having committed the 2004 robbery with Mr. Sokolov. On May 14, 2009, a court ordered his detention until May 24. Mr. Sokolov also told his lawyer that he was subjected to explicit threats of torture in the framework of his detention, to punish him for carrying out human rights activities. On July 31, 2009, the Sverdlovsk Regional Court ruled that Mr. Sokolov should be discharged from pre-trial detention. However, Mr. Sokolov was arrested on the same day on suspicion of another theft committed in 2004. He is now accused of stealing a safe containing two million of roubles from the office of a company in Ekaterinburg, within an organised group that would have been led by his brother, Mr. Aleksander Sokolov. The latter was sentenced in 2008 to ten years and a half in prison for a series of burglaries. On August 4, 2009, the Yekaterinburg District Court ordered that Mr. Aleksei Sokolov be remanded in custody for two months, pending trial for new charges of “theft”. Although the hearing should have been open to public, guards prevented people from attending the trial, which lasted three hours.

In **Turkey**, on May 12, 2009, the offices and homes of four human rights lawyers, Mr. **Hasan Anlar**, Deputy Secretary General of the the Human Rights Association (*İnsan Haklari Derneği - İHD*), Ms. **Filiz Kalayci**, İHD Executive Committee member, Mr. **Halil İbrahim Vargün**, İHD former treasurer, and Mr. **Murat Vargün**, were raided by officers of the Anti-Terror Unit of the police, who were in possession of a search warrant and a detention order against them. The four lawyers were immediately arrested and placed in police custody in the Anti-Terror Forces Unit detention centre, before subsequently released in the night of May 14, 2009. However, the court imposed a travel ban on them.

In addition, still in **Turkey**, on May 28, 2009, the headquarters of the Confederation of Public Employees' Trade Unions (KESK) in Ankara, its branch offices in İzmir and Van, and even the houses and workplaces of some of its members were raided and searched by the Gendarmerie, whereas Turkish ad hoc legislation stipulates that, if required, they should have been carried out by the Public Prosecutor's office. On May 28, 2009, 35 trade union leaders were arrested and detained, of which 22 would remain in prison to date. They are detained in “F-Type” prisons, or small group isolation prisons. Ten KESK members and leaders were already in prison before that time. All this time, the Turkish judiciary has kept the cases “under secrecy”, meaning that lawyers are not allowed to access their clients' files until the Prosecutor's office prepares the indictments.

On August 11, 2009, Mr. **Camal Bektas**, President of Yakay-der, an association struggling for the right to obtain the truth on enforced disappearance cases occurred in Turkey, was convicted for “undermining the reputation of the army” and “propaganda and lies against the State” and sentenced by the Fifth Chamber of the Court of Diyarbakir to one year of imprisonment and a fine of 5,5 YTL (three Euros). As the Fifth Chamber of the Court of Diyarbakir has first and final jurisdiction to entertain the most serious crimes, the sentence cannot be appealed, but Mr. Bektas' lawyer immediately filed an application for review of the conviction before the Supreme Court (Yargitay), in charge of reviewing the decisions and judgements given by courts of justice from the point of their conformity with the law. The application, which suspended the implementation of the sentence, should be examined by Yargitay within three months. Moreover, a criminal

investigation on Mr. Bektas was opened in June 2009 in relation to statements he made between February and June 2009, asking for the opening of a mass grave located in Van, a military area in Eastern Turkey.

In *Uzbekistan*, although some defenders were released in August 2009 pursuant to decisions of amnesty, several human rights defenders remain currently detained as a means to sanction them for their human rights activities. Some of them are suffering severe health problems as a result of poor conditions and ill-treatments in Uzbekistan's notoriously abusive prison system. The following is a non-exhaustive list of imprisoned human rights defenders in Uzbekistan whose health condition would require early release to allow for adequate medical treatment:

- Mr. **Salijon Abdurahmanov**, a human rights activist and journalist, detained since June 7, 2008 is in a very dire situation. His health has severely deteriorated since his arrest and conviction last year. Despite the commitment of the prison authorities to send him to Sangorod (the prison hospital in the Tashkent area), no measure has been taken so far;

- Mr. **Yusuf Juma**, poet, writer and head of the human rights organisation "Sakhroi sherlar", detained since December 17, 2007, is suffering from inhumane conditions of detention in the notorious Zhasyk prison. According to his daughter and relatives of Mr. Juma's fellow prisoners, prison guards are continuously beating and humiliating him, who can hardly walk and is given an insufficient amount of food;

- Mr. **Alisher Karamatov**, Head of the Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan (HRSU) branch in Mirzaabad district, arrested on April 29, 2006, was transferred from the prison Uya 64/49 to Uya 64/18, the sanitary prison in the Tashkent area, on October 12, 2008 because of his health condition. Mr. Karamatov contracted tuberculosis while in detention. His lawyer sought to secure his release on the basis of his health condition, but his attempts have not been successful so far;

- Mr. **Norboy Kholjigitov**, a 60-year-old member of the HRSU Ishtikhan region branch, has been detained since June 4, 2005. He is suffering from diabetes and is not provided the required medical care. First signs of incipient gangrene have appeared on his left leg and hand, as well as on his face;

- Mr. **Khabibulla Okpulatov**, member of the HRSU Ishtikhan district branch, arrested on June 4, 2005, is in a dire health condition. According to his relatives, he can not use his right leg and has serious sight problems, which require urgent medical care;

- Mr. **Agzam Turgunov**, Executive Director and founder of "Mazlum" human rights centre, in Tashkent, and advocate for the rights of prisoners of conscience and against torture, detained since July 11, 2008, was tortured during his interrogation. According to his son who visited him, Mr. Turgunov's health conditions are worsening and he would weigh today only 40 kilograms. The prison administration has repeatedly ignored his complaints about his health and denied him medical care.

Furthermore, on February 11, 2009, the Tashkent Court of Appeal upheld the verdict in first instance against Ms. **Lyudmila Kutepova**, Ms. **Victoria Bajenova**, Ms. Elena Urlaeva, Mr. **A. Mukhitdinov**, Ms. **T. Davlateva**, Ms. **Zulkhumor Tuychieva**, Mr. **A. Volkov**, Ms. **S. Baymatova**, Mr. **O. Sarapulov**, and Ms. **A. Kim**, who had been sentenced to a 280,000 soms' fine (the equivalent of 210 USD, i.e. ten minimum wages) for holding a peaceful protest on December 6, 2008. They were arrested for organising a demonstration near the Prosecutor's office building in Tashkent on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to mark the anniversary of the adoption of the Uzbek Constitution action. The latter were demanding the release of human rights defenders, journalists and Muslims arbitrarily detained, as well as the end of persecutions on religious grounds.

In addition, on June 29, 2009, a court hearing took place before the Samarkand Oblast Criminal

Court in the trial of Mr. **Dilmurod Saidov**, a journalist and member of the independent human rights organisation Ezgulik who collected and published information to defend farmers whose lands were lusted by local authorities representatives and denounced cases of abuse of power and corruption, thereby bringing up evidence of the involvement of various regional officials. Mr. Dilmurod Saidov has been accused of “extortion” and “production, forgery of documents, stamps, seals, blanks and their sale or use”. On July 30, Judge Navruz Mirmukhammedov, of the Taylasky District Court of the Samarkand region, sentenced Mr. Dilmurov Saidov to 12 years’ imprisonment. However, the sentence was not notified to his family, nor to his lawyers.

On July 18, 2009, Mr. **Farhodon Mukhtarov**, an active and long-standing member of the Human Rights Alliance of Uzbekistan, was arrested at the District Prosecutor’s office as he was in the premises to submit a statement and a complaint against illegal actions carried out by police officers and investigator Boymatov. The Prosecutor decided indeed to report his visit to the police station, which came to arrest him directly at the Prosecutor’s office. Mr. Mukhtarov was then brought to the Yunus-Abad police station. At the end of May 2009, Mr. Mukhtarov had already been briefly detained after a complaint had been reportedly filed against him by another Uzbek citizen, apparently for “fraud”. However, the authorities had refused to let him view the complaint.

Recommendations

In view of the alarming situation of human rights defenders in the OSCE area, the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders urges OSCE Participating States to:

- **Guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of human rights defenders in the OSCE Participating States;**
- **Put an end to the continuous repression of human rights defenders and their organisations;**
- **Release immediately and unconditionally all human rights defenders since their detention is arbitrary as it only aims at sanctioning their human rights activities;**
- **Order immediate, thorough, impartial and transparent investigations into the above-mentioned threats, acts of harassment, attacks and assassinations in order to identify all those responsible, bring them before a civil competent and impartial tribunal and apply to them the penal sanctions provided by the law;**
- **Fully recognise the vital role of defenders in the advent of democracy and the rule of law;**
- **Review their national legislation to conform with international and regional human rights instruments, in particular regarding freedoms of association and assembly;**
- **Comply with the provisions of the final document of the 1990 Document of the Copenhagen Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension, of the Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) and of the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, adopted on December 9, 1998 by the United Nations General Assembly;**
- **Support and implement all recommendations brought to them from the March 2006 Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on Human Rights Defenders;**
- **Comply with the provisions of the resolution titled “Strengthening OSCE**

engagement with human rights defenders and national human rights institutions”, adopted by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Kiev on July 10, 2007;

- **Fully take into account the suggestions of commitments listed in the Report submitted to the OSCE Ministerial Council in response to MC Decision No. 17/05 on Strengthening the Effectiveness of the OSCE;**
- **Strengthen the Focal Point for Human Rights Defenders and National Human Rights Institutions established by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) in order to provide it with means to develop its protective mandate.**

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